



Raking cocoa beans, Côte d'Ivoire. ©Robin Romano.

Fact Sheet

ILAB Programming to Combat Child Labor Internationally

The Department of Labor's Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) is a leader in the global campaign to end child labor. Since 1995, ILAB has funded more than 275 projects to combat child labor in over 90 countries and worked with more than 65 organizations. ILAB projects provide direct services to children and their families and help build national and local capacity to address child labor. ILAB supports the collection of reliable data, promotion of effective policies and legislation, enhanced monitoring and enforcement, and the development of national plans of action. ILAB also helps link child labor elimination efforts with other national efforts to promote basic education, social protection, and poverty reduction. As a result of these efforts, close to **2 million children** have been provided with education and vocational training services, and 160,000 vulnerable families have received livelihood support to reduce their reliance on child labor.

Research Projects

In the area of research, ILAB projects pilot new tools and methodologies and deepen our knowledge and understanding of child labor, including its root causes.

- Working with the International Labor Organization's (ILO) International Program on the Elimination of Child Labor (IPEC) and its Statistical Information and Monitoring Program on Child Labor (SIMPOC), ILAB has funded the development of new survey

methodologies, qualitative and quantitative studies, statistical resolutions, and global estimates on child labor and forced labor.

- ILAB has funded over 90 national child labor surveys that have assessed the nature and prevalence of child labor in those countries.
- ILAB funding has also made possible the ILO's publication of four global estimates on working children since 1995, and global estimates on forced labor released in 2005 and 2012.

ILAB funding has allowed the ILO to be at the forefront of collecting statistics on hard-to-research populations and has elevated the cause of worker rights through statistics. These efforts have **built national capacities to collect and analyze child labor data and, in turn, helped countries develop strategies to address the problem.**

Capacity-Building Activities

ILAB projects have also played a major role in building capacity in over 75 countries at the national, district, and community levels. ILAB projects **train labor inspectors and law enforcement officials on child labor law enforcement, and develop community-based, child labor monitoring systems. They also support child labor monitoring and enforcement efforts in the supply chains of key national sectors.** ILAB projects work with governments to

develop and implement specific policies, plans, and programs to combat child labor and forced labor. For example:

- In the Philippines, ILAB projects work with communities, local government, civil society, and industry to reduce child labor in sugarcane production by promoting local monitoring of child labor. ILAB grantees are **working with workers' associations, trade unions, industry associations, and community volunteers to regularly monitor work sites and track children's work status and school attendance.**
- Similarly, in Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana, ILAB projects support national efforts to launch child labor monitoring systems to address child labor in cocoa growing communities that will link children and their families to the education and social protection services they need.

Direct Action Projects

ILAB projects **address root causes of child labor, such as poverty and lack of access to education.** For example:

- In India, ILAB partnered with the national government to combat child labor by helping vulnerable families gain access to Indian social protection and welfare programs.
- In the Dominican Republic, an ILAB funded project **implemented an innovative strategy, called *Espacios Para Crecer* (Spaces for Growth), to provide after school programming for children to keep them out of hazardous work.**
- In Egypt, ILAB has worked with the World Food Program and UNICEF to establish community schools that encourage regular attendance by offering children nutritious snacks and take-home food rations for their families.
- In Africa, projects have supported village saving and loan associations and offered skills training to youth and the mothers of working children to address the economic need that leads to child labor.

Around the world, ILAB projects are having a **demonstrable impact in reducing child labor across countries and in specific sectors.** For example:

- In the Philippines, ILAB has supported projects since 1999 to address child labor in a range of sectors, including fishing, footwear, fireworks, garbage scavenging, mining, quarrying, agriculture, domestic service, and

commercial sexual exploitation. Together, these projects have removed or prevented over 80,000 children from child labor.

- In India, ILAB programming since 2001 has led to the withdrawal of over 115,000 children from hazardous labor in the production of *bidis* (hand-rolled cigarettes), brassware, bricks, fireworks, footwear, glass bangles, locks, matches, silk, and in quarrying.
- In Ecuador, ILAB has supported programming since 1998 that has built national capacity by training labor inspectors and developing a national action plan. These efforts laid the foundation for a groundbreaking initiative by the Government of Ecuador that today has virtually eliminated scavenging by children in the country's garbage dumps.

Technical Assistance Oversight

ILAB continues to **focus on achieving results and assessing performance while being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.** As part of this effort, ILAB requires its grantees to submit technical progress reports and quarterly financial reports and reviews these reports to monitor that projects are meeting their objectives and that resources are being used appropriately. Audits and attestation engagement are used as an additional tool to ensure fiscal accountability of ILAB grants. ILAB also places a major emphasis on learning through evaluation. ILAB **uses independent, external implementation, and impact evaluations to assess performance, identify good practices, and when needed, implement corrective action.** For example:

- ILAB uses impact evaluations to gather empirical evidence on what approaches work best to address child labor. ILAB is currently implementing such impact evaluations in El Salvador, Peru, and the Philippines, and recently completed two evaluations in Bolivia and Egypt.
- ILAB supports thematic and synthesis evaluation studies on issues such as vocational training and alternative income generation.

As these examples illustrate, **ILAB takes a multi-faceted approach to address child labor.** ILAB programming has helped increase international understanding of child labor and the approaches needed to confront this global issue. ILAB's **efforts remain deeply rooted in promoting lasting and visible change** at the community-level and in the daily lives of children and families-in-need.